Chapter 6
Cultural Identity and Cultural Biases

Cultural patterns are critically important in shaping the preferred ways to think, feel, and act in a variety of situations. An equally interesting and important question in the development of intercultural communication competence concerns how people come to identify themselves as belonging to a particular cultural group. For example, how and when does a child begin to think of herself as a Latina, Japanese American, or Japanese? When do adults who are born into one culture and living in another begin to think of their cultural identity as embracing parts of both their original culture and the later culture? Similarly, how are some people defined as "not members" of our cultural group? How does a culture "identify" who we are and in what terms? How and why do groups of people from one culture develop negative attitudes and actions toward other cultural groups?

The present chapter discusses some aspects of cultural identity that can have a large effect on intercultural communication. We begin with a discussion of cultural identity and the powerful ways in which our self-concept as a member of a particular cultural group filters our interpretations of the world. Then we explore the nature of cultural biases, rooted in cultural identity, as we examine the effects of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and racism on intercultural interactions.

6.1: Cultural Identity

As part of the socialization process, children learn to view themselves as members of particular groups. Children in all cultures, for example, are taught to identify with their families even though whom to include as part of one's "family" differs across cultures. As a child becomes a teenager and then an adult, the development of vocational and avocational interests creates new groups with which to identify. "Baseball player," "ballet dancer," "scientist," "gamer," or "blogger" may become important labels to describe the self.

Another feature of socialization is that people are taught about groups to which they do not belong, and they often learn that certain groups should be avoided. This tendency to identify as a member of some groups, called **ingroups**, and to distinguish these ingroups from **outgroups** is so prevalent in human thinking that it has been described as a universal human tendency.[1] We all seek ways to connect with and belong to our ingroups and to understand our roles as members of that group. Recent scholarship considers the role of the Internet and social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter) in supporting or diminishing this inclination to define others as either *in* or *out* of our group.[2]

Culture Connections

I do still encounter incidents and people who don't understand Koreans or Korean culture. At work I was hanging out in the kitchen tossing French fries back and forth with a cook who is African American. He said, "Hey, don't be doing any of that Kung-fu stuff on me! I know you Chinese people!" I said, "Um, I'm not Chinese. I'm Korean." He said, "What's the difference?" like it was unimportant. I said, "It's a big difference. What's the difference between a Jamaican and a Nigerian?" He said, "I don't know." "The difference is culture! Different languages, food, values, beliefs, traditions, music, ways of life!"

—Mei Lin Kroll

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- **6.1.1: Describe the three different types of identities**
- **6.1.2: Describe the process of the formation of cultural identity**
- **6.1.3: Discuss key characteristics of cultural identity**

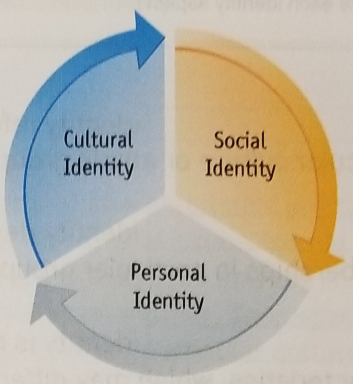
6.1.1: The Nature of Identity

OBJECTIVE: Describe the three different types of identities

Related to the distinction between ingroup and outgroup membership is the concept of one's **identity** or self-concept. An individual's self-concept is built on cultural, social, and personal identities (see Figure 6.1).[3]

For ease and clarity, we have chosen to present aspects of a person's identity as separate categories. There is a great deal of interdependence, however, among these three aspects of identity. Characteristics of people's social identities will inevitably be linked to the preferences shaped by their cultural identities. Similarly, how people enact their unique interests will also be heavily influenced by their cultural identities. Thus, for example, a teenage girl's identity will likely be strongly linked to her culture's preferences for gendered role behaviors as well as to her social class and her personal characteristics and traits.[4] There may even be conflicts among one's cultural, social, and personal identities. The teenage girl, for instance, may be expected to fulfill a traditional and culturally anchored female role, which

Figure 6.1 Aspects of Identity



Three Aspects of Identity

Cultural identity, social identity,[5] and personal identity are different aspects of identity in intercultural communication.

Interactive

Cultural Identity | Social Identity | **Personal Identity**

Social identity develops as a consequence of memberships in particular groups within one's culture. The characteristics and concerns common to most members of such social groups shape the way individuals view their characteristics. The types of groups with which people identify can vary widely and might include perceived similarities due to age, gender, work, religion, ideology, social class, place (neighborhood, region, and nation), and common interests. For instance, those baseball players, ballet dancers, and scientists who strongly identify with their particular professions likely view themselves as "belonging" to "their" group of professionals, with whom they have similar traits and share similar concerns. Identities are also "social" because the larger social world influences how people view themselves and are viewed by others. For example, the social institutions in our lives—the schools we attend, the health providers we see, the companies where we work, and the governments to which we pay taxes—"identify" or recognize us in terms of predetermined categories like race or ethnicity (black, Latina/o, Asian, Pacific Islander, White) or the tax brackets we occupy by virtue of our family income. These categories have been created to designate who belongs to certain groups and which groups have particular characteristics. Such categories can be seen on birth certificates, medical forms, school applications, and job requests. Thus, our identities are often framed by social institutions and categories that seek to "determine" who we are, even though this judgment may conflict with our own view of ourselves and our identities.

...gnize each identity aspect?

Interactive

_____ identity refers to one's sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group.

_____ identity develops as a consequence of memberships in particular groups within one's culture.

_____ identity is based on people's unique characteristics, which may differ from those of others in their cultural and social groups.

Start Over | Check Answers

may include household chores and caregiving responsibilities for other family members, when she may want more personal autonomy and the ability to pursue a career.

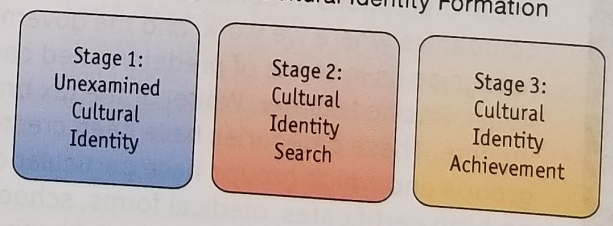
6.1.2: The Formation of Cultural Identity

OBJECTIVE: Describe the process of the formation of cultural identity

Cultural identities often develop through a process involving three stages: unexamined cultural identity, cultural identity search, and cultural identity achievement (see Figure 6.2).[6]

STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL IDENTITY Table 6.1 presents some sample comments from individuals that reveal how they are experiencing the three stages of cultural identity development.

Figure 6.2 Stages of Cultural Identity Formation



6.1.3: Characteristics of Cultural Identity

OBJECTIVE: Discuss key characteristics of cultural identity

Once formed, cultural identities provide an essential framework, organizing and interpreting our experiences of others. This is because cultural identities are central,

Three Stages of Cultural Identity Formation

We develop and experience our cultural identities in stages, beginning with an unexamined cultural identity.[7]

Interactive

Stage 1: Unexamined Cultural Identity

During the **unexamined cultural identity stage**, one's cultural characteristics are taken for granted, and consequently there is little interest in exploring cultural issues. Young children, for instance, typically lack an awareness of cultural differences and the distinguishing characteristics that differentiate one culture from another. Teenagers and adults may not want to categorize themselves as belonging to any particular culture. Some people may not have explored the meanings and consequences of their cultural membership but may simply have accepted preconceived ideas about it that were obtained from parents, the community, the mass media, and others. Consequently, some individuals may unquestioningly accept the prevailing stereotypes held by others and may internalize common stereotypes of their own culture and of themselves. Scholars have suggested that the cultural identities of many European Americans, in particular, have remained largely unexamined, a consequence of the power, centrality, and privilege that the European American cultural group has had in the United States. As Judith Martin, Robert Krizek, Thomas Nakayama, and Lisa Bradford suggest,

> This lack of attention to white identity and self-labeling reflects the historical power held by Whites in the United States. That is, Whites as the privileged group take their identity as the norm or standard by which other groups are measured, and this identity is therefore invisible, even to the extent that many Whites do not consciously think about the profound effect being white has on their everyday lives.

Stage 2: Cultural Identity Search

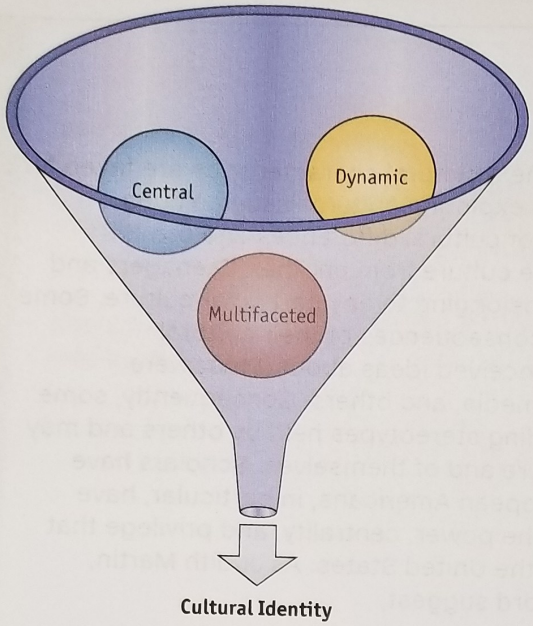
Stage 3: Cultural Identity Achievement

Table 6.1 Stages in the Development of Cultural Identity

Consider the following sample comments, provided in Table 6.1, from individuals in each of the three stages of cultural identity development.[8]

Stage	Sample Comments	Source of Comments
Unexamined cultural identity	"My parents tell me about where they lived, but what do I care? I've never lived there."	Mexican American male
	"Why do I have to learn who was the first black woman to do this or that? I'm just not too interested."	African American female
	"I don't have a culture. I'm just an American."	European American male
Cultural identity search	"I think people should know what black people had to go through to get to where we are now."	African American female
	"There are a lot of non-Japanese people around me, and it gets pretty confusing to try and decide who I am."	Japanese American male
	"I want to know what we do and how our culture is different from others."	Mexican American female
Cultural identity achievement	"My culture is important, and I am proud of what I am. Japanese people have so much to offer."	Japanese American male
	"It used to be confusing to me, but it's clear now. I'm happy being black."	African American female

Figure 6.3 Characteristics of Cultural Identity



dynamic, and multifaceted components of one's self-concept (see Figure 6.3).

CENTRAL COMPONENTS Cultural identities are central to a person's sense of self. Like gender and race, your culture is more "basic" because it is broadly influential and is linked to a great number of other aspects of your self-concept. These core aspects of your identity are likely to be important in most of your interactions with others. Most components of your identity, however, become important only when they are activated by specific circumstances. For many people, the experience of living in another culture or interacting with a person from a different culture triggers an awareness of their own cultural identities that they did not have before. When a component of your identity becomes conscious and important to you, or "activated," your experiences get filtered through that portion of your identity. Aspects of one's cultural identity can be activated not only by direct experiences with others but also by media reports, artistic portrayals that have particular cultural themes, musical performances (such as rap music) that are identified with specific cultural groups, and a range of other personal and mass-mediated experiences.[9] Thus, if individuals from one's culture are frequently portrayed in popular films and television programs, this can provide a sense of legitimacy for the culture and can help to establish that the culture's members are attractive, desirable, and good. Conversely, the absence of such role models in the media can dampen one's identification with the culture and the individual's perceptions that the culture is vital and vibrant. Because your cultural identity is likely to be central to your sense of self, most of your experiences are interpreted or "framed" by your cultural membership.

DYNAMIC COMPONENTS Because cultural identities are dynamic, your cultural identity—your sense of the culture to which you belong and the person you are in light of this cultural membership—exists within a changing social context. Consequently, your identity is not static, fixed, and enduring; rather, it is dynamic and changes with your ongoing life experiences. In even the briefest encounter with people whose cultural backgrounds differ from your own, your sense of who you are *at that instant* may well be altered, at least in some small ways.

Cultural identity shifts can occur because others may see you differently from the way you see yourself. If you think of yourself, for example, as an "Asian American," whereas others refer to you as an "Asian" who belongs in another country, then clashing identities may be at play in the interaction. Fourth- and fifth-generation Asian Americans have long expressed frustration at peers who have presumed that they were foreign-born and would speak with an Asian accent. As a result, their interactions with these peers were often hindered, tense, and negative. Similarly, this clash of identities occurs when a Latino is approached by someone who presumes that he speaks Spanish because of his physical appearance or other markers of his "Latino-ness." In actuality, he may not speak Spanish and may feel as if the other person does not understand who he really is. Cultural identities can be misrecognized based on a person's physical appearance and the presumptions others have about cultural groups, the languages they speak, and their expectations about "typical" behaviors, which are often based on stereotypes or inaccurate media depictions.

Over time, as you adapt to various intercultural challenges, your cultural identity may be transformed into one that is substantially different from what it used to be.[10] The inaccurate belief that cultural identities are permanent, that "Once a Swedish American, always a Swedish American," ignores the possibility of profound changes that people may experience as a result of their intercultural contacts. Indeed, recent communication technologies have made it easier, and therefore more common, for those living within a "foreign" culture to maintain connections to people from their culture of origin—both those "back home" and others who, like themselves, are experiencing the changes and disconnections of living in a new culture.[11]

MULTIFACETED COMPONENTS Cultural identities are also multifaceted. At any given moment you have many "components" that make up your identity. For instance, a specific person may simultaneously view herself as a student, an employee, a friend, a woman, a Southerner, a daughter, a Methodist, a Millennial, and more. Similarly, there are typically many facets or components to your cultural identity.

Culture Connections

"What *are* you?" the more inquisitive *mexicanos* I met would ask. "What do you consider yourself?" I didn't fit into the categories into which you placed brown-skinned people in Mexico: I was a U.S.-born young man with Mayan features who carried himself with a vaguely American air of entitlement and spoke a fluent but strange variant of Spanish. Much is made in Mexico of its multiethnic blend of Spanish and indigenous cultures, the *mestizaje*, or mixing, celebrated in the paintings of Siqueíros and Rivera. But when it comes to the simpler notions of national identity, Mexico is a very homogeneous place. To say "I am *mexicano*" implies an identifiable set of beliefs and customs; love for the tricolor flag, reverence for early-twentieth-century revolutionary icons like Pancho Villa, and shared grievances with respect to the United States. When I responded to the question *What are you?* with a perplexed knotting of my brow, my *mexicano* acquaintances would elaborate with "Are you *norte-americano*? Are you Guatemalan?" When I told them I was both, a "citizen of the Americas," this left them unsatisfied. Clearly, I had to be one or the other.

—Hector Tobar

Many people incorrectly assume that an individual could, or perhaps should, identify with only one cultural group. However, as Young Yun Kim suggests,

> **If someone sees himself or herself, or is seen by others, as a Mexican-American, then this person's identity is [commonly] viewed to exclude all other identities. This tendency to see cultural identity in an "all-or-none" and "either-or" manner glosses over the fact that many people's identities are not locked into a single, uncompromising category, but incorporate other identities as well.[12]**

Frequently, U.S. Americans with multiple cultural heritages must make strategic interaction choices to selectively emphasize one cultural identity over another as they move in and out of these identities. For instance, in a practice known as **code switching**, a man with both Chinese and African American cultural heritages may enact African American–inflected speech around his African American family and friends while de-emphasizing these behaviors when talking with his Asian relatives.[13] Given our increasingly multicultural world, in which people from many cultures coexist and in which the United States has become a country where individuals from many cultures live and interact, the multifaceted characteristic of cultural identity becomes even more important.[14]

WRITING PROMPT

Your Identity Stages

Reflect on your cultural/ethnic identity. Which stages of identity development can you remember having experienced? Provide examples. What was it like to go through these stages?

The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

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6.2: Cultural Biases

We defined *culture* as a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms, and social practices that affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people. We also pointed out that culture really exists in people's minds, but that the consequences of culture—the shared interpretations—can be seen in people's communication behaviors. Shared interpretations, which we have called *cultural patterns*, provide guidelines about how people should behave, and they indicate what to expect in interactions with others. In other words, a culture's shared interpretations create predictability and stability in people's lives. Cultural similarity allows people to reduce uncertainty and to know what to expect when interacting with others.

Interaction only within one's own culture produces a number of obvious benefits. Because the culture provides predictability, it reduces the threat of the unknown. When something or someone that is unknown or unpredictable enters a culture, the culture's beliefs, values, norms, and social practices tell people how to interpret and respond appropriately, thus reducing the perceived threat of the intrusion. Cultural patterns also allow for automatic responses to stimuli; in essence, cultural patterns save people time and energy.

Culture Connections

I had left Nigeria with the impression that African Americans were confined to a life of silliness and crime in America, and that the experience of slavery had wrought considerable havoc on the psyches of blacks. My experiences in Nigeria with some African Americans living and working there (my boss was African American, as was one of my good high school friends) did little to alter

> the very negative perceptions reflected in media images that had become the prism through which I saw life in America. My initial interactions with African Americans upon my arrival in the United States were therefore filled with curiosity, because I wanted to get to know them, and caution—one could even say fear—because of the negative media portrayals. Such fear was manifested in my polite refusal of an offer from a young African American male staffer to assist me with my luggage at Dulles; yet I felt safe when a similar offer came, moments later, from a white male attendant! For most newcomers into a foreign land, their knowledge of a place is typically informed by media images.
>
> —Peter O. Nwosu

Intercultural communication, by definition, means that people are interacting with at least one culturally different person. Consequently, the sense of security, comfort, and predictability that characterizes communication with culturally similar people is lost. The greater the degree of interculturalness, the greater the loss of predictability and certainty. Assurances about the accuracy of interpretations of verbal and nonverbal messages are lost.

Terms that are often used when communicating with culturally different people include *unknown, unpredictable, ambiguous, weird, mysterious, unexplained, exotic, unusual, unfamiliar, curious, novel, odd, outlandish,* and *strange.* As you read this list, consider how the choice of a particular word might also reflect a particular value.

WRITING PROMPT

Cultural Biases in Action

What characteristics, values, and knowledge allow individuals to respond more competently to the threat of dealing with cultural differences? What situations heighten the perception of threat among members of different cultural groups? Explain which cultural pattern(s) would be most helpful for dealing with each situation.

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By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- **6.2.1:** Explain the major ways humans process information about others
- **6.2.2:** Summarize how ethnocentrism affects intercultural competence
- **6.2.3:** Explain the effect of stereotyping on intercultural competence
- **6.2.4:** Describe how intercultural competence is impacted by prejudice
- **6.2.5:** Describe the effect of discrimination on intercultural competence
- **6.2.6:** Explain how racism affects intercultural competence

6.2.1: Social Categorizing

OBJECTIVE: Explain the major ways humans process information about others

Three features in the way all humans process information about others are important to your understanding of intercultural competence:

1. First, as cognitive psychologists have repeatedly demonstrated, people impose a pattern on their world by organizing the stimuli that bombard their senses into conceptual categories. Every waking moment people are presented with literally hundreds of different perceptual stimuli. Therefore, it becomes necessary to simplify the information by selecting, organizing, and reducing it to less complex forms. That is, to comprehend stimuli, we organize them into categories, groupings, and patterns. As a child, you might have completed a drawing by connecting numbered dots. Emerging from the lines was the figure of an animal or a familiar toy. Even though its complete form was not drawn, it was relatively easy to identify. This kind of recognition occurs simply because human beings have a tendency to organize perceptual cues to impose meaning, usually by using familiar, previous experiences.
2. Second, most people tend to think that other people perceive, evaluate, and reason about the world in the same way they do. In other words, humans assume that other people with whom they interact are like themselves. Indeed, it is quite common for people to draw on their personal experiences to understand and evaluate the motivations of others. This common human tendency is sometimes called *ethnocentrism.*
3. Third, humans simplify the processing and organizing of information from the environment by identifying certain characteristics as belonging to certain categories of people and events. For example, a child's experiences with several dogs that growled and snapped are likely to result in a future reaction to other dogs as if they will also growl and snap. The characteristics of particular events, people, or objects, once experienced, are often assumed to be typical of similar events, people, or objects. Though these assumptions are sometimes accurate, often they are not—not all dogs necessarily growl and snap at young children. Nevertheless, information processing results in a simplification of the world, so that prior experiences are used as the basis for determining both the categories and the attributes of the events. When applied to other people, this process is called *stereotyping.*

Please note that we are describing these human tendencies nonevaluatively. Their obvious advantage is that they allow people to respond efficiently to a variety of perceptual stimuli. Nevertheless, this organization and simplification can create some genuine obstacles to intercultural competence because they may lead to prejudice, discrimination, and racism.

6.2.2: Ethnocentrism

OBJECTIVE: Summarize how ethnocentrism affects intercultural competence

All cultures teach their members the "preferred" ways to respond to the world, which are often labeled as "natural" or "appropriate." Thus, people generally perceive their own experiences, which are shaped by their own cultural forces, as natural, human, and universal. **Ethnocentrism** is the notion that the beliefs, values, norms, and practices of one's own culture are superior to those of others.

Cultures also train their members to use the categories of their own cultural experiences when judging the experiences of people from other cultures. Our culture tells us that the way we were taught to behave is "right" or "correct," and those who do things differently are wrong. William G. Sumner, who first introduced the concept of ethnocentrism, defined it as "the view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it."[15] Sumner illustrates how ethnocentrism works in the following example:

> When Caribs were asked whence they came, they replied, "We alone are people." "Kiowa" means real or principal people. A Laplander is a "man" or "human being." The highest praise a Greenlander has for a European visiting the island is that the European by studying virtue and good manners from the Greenlanders soon will be as good as a Greenlander. Native peoples call themselves "men" as a rule. All others are something else, but not men. The Jews divide all mankind into themselves and Gentiles—they being the "chosen people." The Greeks and Romans called outsiders "barbarians." Arabs considered themselves as the noblest nation and all others as barbarians. Russian books and newspapers talk about its civilizing mission, and so do the books and journals of France, Germany, and the United States. Each nation now regards itself as the leader of civilization, the best, the freest, and the wisest. All others are inferior.[16]

Ethnocentrism is a learned belief in cultural superiority. Because cultures teach people what the world is "really like" and what is "good," people consequently believe that the values of their culture are natural and correct. Thus, people from other cultures who do things differently are "wrong." When combined with the natural human tendency to prefer what is typically experienced, ethnocentrism produces emotional reactions to cultural differences that reduce people's willingness to understand disparate cultural messages.

The U.S. American preoccupation with body odors can be seen on the shelves of many stores.

Ethnocentrism tends to highlight and exaggerate cultural differences. As an interesting instance of ethnocentrism, consider beliefs about body odor. Most U.S. Americans spend large sums of money each year to rid themselves of natural body odor. They then replace their natural odors with artificial ones as they apply deodorants, bath powders, shaving lotions, perfumes, hair sprays, shampoos, mousse, gels, toothpaste, mouthwash, and breath mints. Many U.S. Americans probably believe that they do not have an odor—even after they have routinely applied most, if not all, of the artificial ones in the preceding list. Yet the same individuals will react negatively to culturally different others who do not remove natural body odors and who refuse to apply artificial ones.

Ethnocentrism can occur along all of the dimensions of cultural patterns. People from individualistic cultures, for instance, find the idea that a person's self-concept is tied to a group to be unfathomable. To most U.S. Americans, the idea of an arranged marriage seems strange at best and a confining and reprehensible limitation on personal freedom at worst.

Culture Connections

He did not regard himself as a particularly ethnocentric being. In theory he had always extolled the virtues of understanding between persons from widely differing parts of the world. He wanted to see the good, the new and exciting, in other people and cultures but was catching himself getting more and more upset at, in his view, the decidedly irrational India.

—Kjell Eriksson

Our point here is that what is familiar and comfortable inevitably seems the best, right, and natural way of doing things. Judgments about what is "right" or "natural" create emotional responses to cultural differences that may interfere with our ability to understand the symbols used by other cultures. For example, European Americans think it is "human nature" to orient oneself to the future and to want to improve one's material status in life. Individuals whose cultures have been influenced by alternative forces, resulting in contrary views, are often judged negatively and treated with derision.

To be a competent intercultural communicator, you must realize that you typically use the categories of your own culture to judge and interpret the behaviors of those who are culturally different from you. You must also be aware of your own emotional reactions to the sights, sounds, smells, and variations in message systems that you encounter when communicating with people from other cultures. The competent intercultural communicator does not necessarily suppress negative feelings but acknowledges their existence and seeks to minimize their effect on her or his communication. If you are reacting strongly to some aspect of another culture, seek out an explanation in the ethnocentric preferences that your culture has taught you.

6.2.3: Stereotyping

OBJECTIVE: Explain the effect of stereotyping on intercultural competence

Journalist Walter Lippmann introduced the term **stereotyping** in 1922 to refer to a selection process that is used to organize and simplify perceptions of others.[17] Stereotypes are a form of generalization about some group of people. When people stereotype others, they take a category of people and make assertions about the characteristics of all people who belong to that category. The consequence of stereotyping is that the vast degree of differences that exist among the members of any one group may not be taken into account in the interpretation of messages.

To illustrate how stereotyping works, read the following list: college professors, surfers, Marxists, Democrats, bankers, New Yorkers, Californians. Probably, as you read each of these categories, it was relatively easy for you to associate particular characteristics and traits with each group. Now imagine that a person from one of these groups walked into the room and began a conversation with you. In all likelihood, you would associate the group's characteristics with that specific individual.

Your responses to this simple example illustrate what typically occurs when people are stereotyped:

- First, someone identifies an outgroup category—"they"—whose characteristics differ from those in one's own social ingroup.
- Next, the perceived dissimilarities between the groups are enlarged and accentuated, thereby creating differences that are clearer and more distinct. By making sharper and more pronounced boundaries between the groups, it becomes more difficult for individuals to move from one group to another.
- Concurrently, an evaluative component is introduced, whereby the characteristics of the outgroup are negatively judged; that is, the outgroup is regarded as wrong, inferior, or stigmatized as a result of given characteristics.
- Finally, the group's characteristics are attributed to all people who belong to the group, so that a specific person is not treated as a unique individual but as a typical member of a category.

Categories that are used to form stereotypes about groups of people can vary widely, and they might include the following:

- Regions of the world (Asians, Arabs, South Americans, Africans)
- Countries (Kenya, Japan, China, France, Great Britain)
- Regions within countries (Northern Indians, Southern Indians, U.S. Midwesterners, U.S. Southerners)
- Cities (New Yorkers, Parisians, Londoners)
- Cultures (English, French, Latino, Russian, Serbian, Yoruba, Mestizo, Thai, Navajo)
- Races (African, Caucasian)
- Religions (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian)
- Ages (young, old, middle-aged, children, adults)
- Occupations (teacher, farmer, doctor, housekeeper, mechanic, architect, musician)
- Relational roles (mother, friend, father, sister, brother)
- Physical characteristics (short, tall, fat, skinny)
- Social classes (wealthy, poor, middle class)

This list is by no means exhaustive. What it should illustrate is the enormous range of possibilities for classification and simplification. Consider your own stereotypes of people in these groups. Many may have been created by direct experience with only one or two people from a particular group. Others are probably based on secondhand information and opinions, output from the mass media, and general habits of thinking; they may even have been formed without any direct experience with individuals from the group. Yet many people are prepared to assume that their stereotypes are accurate representations of all members of specific groups.[18] Interestingly, stereotypes that are derived from the opinions of others or from the media tend to be more extreme, less variable from one person to another, more uniformly applied to others, and

more resistant to change than are stereotypes based on direct personal experiences and interactions.[19]

INACCURACIES OF STEREOTYPES Stereotypes are often inaccurate. In particular, there are three ways in which they are often wrong.

WRITING PROMPT

The Tricky Aspects of Stereotypes

Think about a stereotype you have heard about a cultural group. Which of the three forms of stereotype inaccuracies is featured in that recalled stereotype? To what extent do you think that inaccuracy is hidden or forgotten? Why do you think that is so?

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The problems associated with using stereotyping as a means of understanding individuals is best illustrated by identifying the groups to which you belong. Think about the characteristics that might be stereotypically assigned to those groups. Determine whether the characteristics apply to you or to others in your group. Some of them may be accurate descriptions; many, however, will be totally inaccurate, and you would resent being thought of in that way. Stereotypes distort or hide the individual. Ultimately, people may become blind to the actual characteristics of the group because not all stereotypes are accurate. Most are based on relatively minimal experiences with particular individuals.

Stereotype inaccuracy can lead to errors in interpretations and expectations about the behaviors of others. Interpretation errors occur because stereotypes are used not only to categorize specific individuals and events but

Three Forms of Stereotype Inaccuracies

Stereotypes can be inaccurate in three ways.[20]

Interactive

First Form of Stereotype Inaccuracy

First, as we have suggested, stereotypes often are assumed to apply to all or most of the members of a particular group or category, resulting in a tendency to ignore differences among the individual members of the group. This type of stereotyping error is called the **outgroup homogeneity effect** and results in a tendency to regard all members of a particular group as much more similar to one another than they actually are. Arab Americans, for instance, complain that other U.S. Americans often hold undifferentiated stereotypes about members of their culture.

Second Form of Stereotype Inaccuracy

Third Form of Stereotype Inaccuracy

also to judge them. As Ziva Kunda and Bonnie Sherman-Williams note,

> Consider, for example, the unambiguous act of failing a test. Ethnic stereotypes may lead perceivers to attribute such failure to laziness if the actor is Asian but to low ability if the actor is Black. Thus stereotypes will affect judgments of the targets' ability even if subjects base these judgments only on the act, because the stereotypes will determine the meaning of the act.[21]

Stereotypes provide the bases for estimating, often inaccurately, what members of the stereotyped group are likely to do. Most disturbingly, stereotypes will likely persist even when members of the stereotyped group repeatedly behave in ways that disconfirm them. Once a stereotype has taken hold, members of the stereotyped group who behave in nonstereotypical ways will be expected to compensate in their future actions to "make up for" their atypical behavior.

CONSEQUENCES OF STEREOTYPES Stereotypes have consequences in both obvious and startling ways. An obvious consequence is that those being stereotyped may be treated differently—and often less favorably—than are others. An alarming concern of stereotypes is that the targets of stereotyping may internalize the judgments that others make about them. For instance, in a quandary called **stereotype threat**, we often apply the prevailing stereotypes to ourselves, frequently resulting in negative consequences and diminished performances due to an increased pressure to do well.[22] But for a stereotype threat to affect you, four conditions must be met:

1. You feel closely identified with a particular culture or social group.
2. You are aware of a commonly held stereotype related to your group (even if you don't believe the stereotype is accurate).
3. You want to do well on an upcoming task or encounter.
4. The stereotype is "activated," or made salient, in that specific encounter.

For example, in an experiment using a simple golf game, the outcome among European Americans was worse and the outcome among African Americans was better when common stereotypes were activated by telling participants that the game measured their "natural athletic ability" versus their "sports intelligence."[23] The idea of stereotype threat helps to explain a range of impaired performances and lessened accomplishments, including those involving women's achievements in sports and sciences,[24] immigrants' successes in their adopted countries,[25] older adults' abilities on both physical and cognitive tasks,[26] cultural differences in job-related successes,[27] disparities in "minority group" academic achievement,[28] the behaviors of people who are chronically poor,[29] and even one's ability to develop and sustain intercultural relationships.[30]

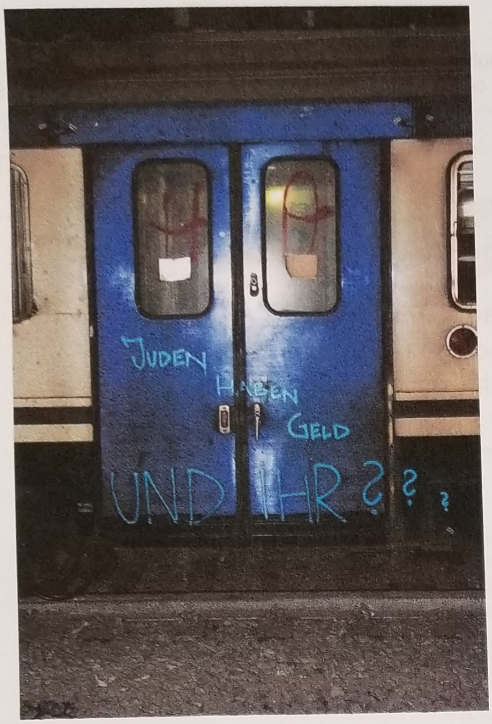
The process underlying stereotyping is absolutely essential for human beings to function. Some categorization is necessary and normal. Indeed, there is survival value in the ability to make accurate generalizations about others, and stereotypes function as mental "energy-saving devices" to help make those generalizations efficiently.[31] However, stereotypes may also promote prejudice and discrimination directed toward members of cultures other than one's own. Intercultural competence requires an ability to move beyond stereotypes and to respond to the individual. Previous experiences should be used only as guidelines or suggested interpretations rather than as hard-and-fast categories. Judee Burgoon, Charles Berger, and Vincent Waldron suggest that mindfulness—that is, paying conscious attention to the nature and basis of one's stereotypes—can help reduce stereotype inaccuracies and thereby decrease intercultural misunderstandings.[32]

6.2.4: Prejudice

OBJECTIVE: Describe how intercultural competence is impacted by prejudice

Prejudice refers to negative attitudes toward other people that are based on faulty and inflexible stereotypes. Prejudiced attitudes include irrational feelings of dislike and even hatred for certain groups, biased perceptions and beliefs about the group members that are not based on direct experiences and firsthand knowledge, and a readiness to behave in negative and unjust ways toward members of the group. Gordon Allport, who first focused scholarly attention on prejudice, argued that prejudiced people ignore evidence that is inconsistent with their biased viewpoint, or they distort the evidence to fit their prejudices.[33]

The strong link between prejudice and stereotypes should be obvious. Prejudiced thinking is dependent on stereotypes and is a fairly normal phenomenon.[34] To be prejudiced toward a group of people sometimes makes it easier to respond to them. We are not condoning prejudice or the hostile and violent actions that may occur as a result of prejudice. We are suggesting that prejudice is a universal psychological process; all people have a propensity for prejudice toward others who are unlike themselves. For individuals to move beyond prejudicial attitudes and for societies to avoid basing social structures on their prejudices about groups of people, it is critical to recognize the prevalence of prejudicial thinking.



This Italian train, spray painted in German with "Jews have money. And you???" illustrates the prejudice, discrimination, and racism (called *anti-Semitism* when referring to Jews) experienced by many cultural groups.

One form of stereotype-based prejudice is called *implicit bias*. An **implicit bias** refers to a deeply held perception and expectation about others, especially those others who differ from us in fundamental ways: their nationality, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, linguistic background, and the like.[35] Implicit biases guide many of our actions and decisions about those around us, and they often predispose us to favor our own ingroup members. For example, when interviewing possible job candidates, a manager may be surprised to encounter an elderly, white-haired male; as a result, the manager may ask questions about the applicant's health and energy, because the manager has an implicit bias about the appropriate age and "health" status of the ideal job candidate. This implicit bias shapes the manager's subsequent behaviors toward that interviewee, but in a way that the manager may not have consciously noticed. The manager assumed that the job candidate was clearly not "right" for the position. People often do not recognize their implicit biases; indeed, implicit biases can persist even when they are consciously and explicitly rejected. Instead, the biased perceptions and choices are defended by using other generalizations and justifications: The person is not a "good fit" for the job, or the person was not the best applicant in the pool. An implicit bias is especially dangerous when enacted by people in positions of power, such as physicians, judges, lawyers, jurors, employers, and others.[36]

Obviously, these functions cannot be neatly applied to all instances of prejudice. Nor are people usually aware of the specific reasons for their prejudices. For each person, prejudicial attitudes may serve several functions.

WRITING PROMPT

Which Prejudice Function Occurs Most Frequently?

Reflect upon your experiences and identify which of the four functions of prejudice you have witnessed most often (in the media, in surrounding social interactions, in the surrounding contexts). Why do you think that particular prejudice function occurs so much? Explain your reasoning and whether the use of this prejudice function will change over time or stay constant.

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

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6.2.5: Discrimination

OBJECTIVE: Describe the effect of discrimination on intercultural competence

Whereas *prejudice* refers to people's attitudes or mental representations, the term **discrimination** refers to the behavioral manifestations of that prejudice. Thus, discrimination can be thought of as prejudice "in action."

Discrimination can occur in many forms. From the extremes of segregation and apartheid to biases in the availability of housing, employment, education, economic resources, personal safety, and legal protections, discrimination represents unequal treatment of certain individuals solely because of their membership in a particular group. Because our focus in this book is intercultural communication, we will emphasize the ways in which one's communication behaviors contribute to and worsen discrimination against people from other cultures.

One form of communication-based discrimination occurs in everyday conversations. When people who are discussing different racial and cultural groups verbalize deliberate acts of bigotry—prejudicial comments, jokes that belittle and dehumanize others, or negative stereotypes about others—they are establishing and legitimizing the existence of their prejudices and are laying the "communication groundwork" that makes it acceptable for people to perform discriminatory acts.[37] Such groundwork is laid not only in face-to-face encounters but, increasingly, in online forums as well, which simultaneously provide both anonymity and community.[38]

Another form of communication-based discrimination involves a kind of remark that is more subtle in its effect, as it is typically said by individuals from the

Four Functions of Prejudice

What functions does prejudice serve? We have already suggested that the thought process underlying prejudice includes the need to organize and simplify the world. Richard Brislin (1981) describes four additional benefits, or what he calls "functions" of prejudice[39]: the utilitarian, ego-defensive[40], value-expressive, and knowledge functions.

Interactive

Utilitarian | Ego-Defensive | Value Expression | Knowledge Function

Brislin suggests that prejudice satisfies a **utilitarian function** or adjustment function. Displaying certain kinds of prejudice means that people receive rewards and avoid punishments. For example, if you express prejudicial statements about certain people, other people may like you more. It is also easier to simply dislike and be prejudiced toward members of other groups because they can then be dismissed without going through the effort necessary to adjust to them.

dominant culture who are well-meaning, who do not intend to insult, and who are unaware that their words may be offensive. Called a **microaggression**, it is a brief comment or communicative act that presumes negative attributes about others because of their cultural membership.[41] One noteworthy microaggression happened in 2007 during the presidential primaries, when candidate Joe Biden described candidate Barak Obama as "the first mainstream African American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy."[42] While intended as a compliment, the message heard by African Americans was "Obama is an exception; most African Americans are unintelligent, inarticulate, dirty, and unattractive."[43] More commonly, microaggressions can occur, for example, when native-born Latinos or Asian Americans are presumed to be from someplace else and are therefore asked "Where are you from?" or are told "You speak good English." Similarly, when a European American presumes she is free from prejudice because "I have several black friends," or a person of color is mistaken as a service worker, or the hundreds of other ways that a small slight is directed toward others because of their culture, that is a microaggression. Table 6.2 provides a list of some types of microaggressions and the likely messages they convey to others.

Often, displays of discrimination are motivated not by direct hostility toward some other group but merely by a strong preference for and loyalty to one's own culture.[44] Thus, the formation of one's cultural identity, which we discussed earlier in this chapter, can sometimes lead to hostility, hate, and discrimination directed against nonmembers of that culture.

Table 6.2 Examples of Microaggressions[45]

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land When Asian American and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English." A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language	You are not American. You are a foreigner.
Ascription of intelligence Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race	"You are a credit to your race." "You are so articulate." Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem	People of color are generally not as intelligent as whites. It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
Color-blindness Statements that indicate that a white person does not want to acknowledge race	"When I look at you, I don't see the color." "America is a melting pot." "There is only one race—the human race."	Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic expressions. Assimilate/acculturate to be the dominant culture. Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.
Criminality/assumption of criminal status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.	A white man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a black or Latino person approaches or passes A store owner following a customer of color around the store A white person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it	You are a criminal. You are going to steal/You are poor/You do not belong. You are dangerous.
Denial of individual racism A statement made when whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not racist. I have several black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
Myth of meritocracy Statements that assert race does not play a role in life successes	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job." "Everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough."	People of color are given extra, unfair benefits because of their race. People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/white culture are ideal	Asking a black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down." To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal. Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in a work setting	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-class citizen Occurs when a white person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	Person of color is mistaken for a service worker Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a white passenger Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the white customer behind you "You people …"	People of color are servants to whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions. You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood. Whites are more valued customers than people of color. You don't belong. You are a lesser being.
Environmental microaggressions Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with buildings that are all named after white, heterosexual, upper-class males Television shows and movies that feature predominantly white people, without representation of people of color Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color	You don't belong/You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go. You are an outsider/You don't exist. People of color don't/shouldn't value education. People of color are deviant.

WRITING PROMPT

Microaggressions around Us

Think about all of your past conversations and interactions. What were some of the microaggressions that emerged in those conversations and interactions? Explain how those microaggressions were similar to or different from any of those described in Table 6.2. .What was your response to the message represented by the microaggression? To what extent did you think the message was a negative one? How so? What might you do differently in those conversations and interactions now?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

6.2.6: Racism

OBJECTIVE: Explain how racism affects intercultural competence

One obstacle to intercultural competence to which we want to give special attention is racism. Because racism often plays such a major role in the communication that occurs between people of different races or ethnic groups, it is particularly important to understand how and why it occurs.

The word **racism** itself can evoke powerful emotional reactions, especially for those who have felt the oppression and exploitation that stems from racist attitudes and behaviors. For members of the African American, Asian American, Native American, and Latino cultures, racism has created a social history shaped by prejudice and discrimination.[46] For individual members of these groups, racism has resulted in the pain of oppression. To those who are members of cultural groups that have had the power to oppress and exploit others, the term *racism* often evokes equally powerful thoughts and emotional reactions that deny responsibility for and participation in racist acts and thinking. In this section, we want to introduce some ideas about racism that illuminate the reactions of both those who have received racist communication and those who are seen as exhibiting it.

LEVELS OF RACISM Robert Blauner has described racism as a tendency to categorize people who are culturally different in terms of their physical traits, such as skin color, hair color and texture, facial structure, and eye shape.[47] Dalmas Taylor offers a related approach that focuses on the behavioral components of racism. Taylor defines racism as the cumulative effects of individuals, institutions, and cultures that result in the oppression of ethnic minorities.[48]

Although *racism* is often used synonymously with *prejudice* and *discrimination*, the social attributes that distinguish it from these other terms are oppression and power. *Oppression* refers to "the systematic, institutionalized mistreatment of one group of people by another."[49] Thus, racism includes all of the ways that those who are in control of institutional and cultural power use that supremacy to the disadvantage of members of groups who do not have access to the same kinds of power. Racism oppresses entire groups of people, which makes it difficult, and sometimes virtually impossible, for their members to have access to political, economic, and social power.[50]

Racism is more than just individual hostilities and discriminations directed against another individual or cultural group. Racism is also sustained by and embedded in the established government, legal, and educational structures. Consequently, in a process known as **racialization**, social structures that include governments, courts, and educational institutions assign all individuals to a racial group and then rank those groups into a hierarchy of value.[51] A **hierarchy of value** refers to the unequal positioning of groups, such that those at the top of the hierarchy are positively valued over those who are lower and are thereby regarded as inferior, weak, less valuable, and less important. For example, administrative organizations determine which U.S. Americans "count" as Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or multiracial. Those whose identities don't fit these predetermined categories must nevertheless select from among the available alternatives. Structures of power can also determine if "race" should be "made invisible" in considering admissions into schools and universities. Social structures therefore "manage and oversee what individuals can do, where they can go, what educational institutions they can access, with whom they can interact, and where they can reside."[52] Through racialization, structures of power place groups in unequal relation to one another, often with the dire consequences of exclusion or invisibility for people from some of the groups.

Racism is a force with which both individuals and social systems must grapple. This monument in California's Manzanar War Relocation Center stands as a reminder that about 120,000 Japanese American citizens were rounded up and placed in one of 10 internment camps in the United States during World War II.

Culture Connections

"You judge us but you have not suffered like us."

Edie put her head in her hands. Us and them. Them and us. How many times had she heard it, repeated over and over as if it was something ineluctable and impossible to overcome. The differences usually started off so inconspicuously ... Small differences, between groups of people who were, in essence, the same.

—M. J. McGrath

Levels of Racism

Taylor's approach is useful in that it recognizes that racism can occur at three distinct levels: individual,[53] institutional,[54] and cultural.[55]

Interactive

Individual Level

At the individual level, racism is conceptually very similar to prejudice. Individual racism involves beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of a given person toward people of a different racial group. Specific European Americans, for example, who believe that African Americans are somehow inferior exemplify individual racism. Positive contact and interaction between members of the two groups can sometimes change these attitudes. Yet, as the preceding discussion of prejudice suggests, people with prejudicial beliefs about others often distort new information to fit their original prejudices.

Institutional Level

Cultural Level

FORMS OF RACISM Racism comes in many different forms that vary in intensity and expression.

6.3: Identity, Biases, and Intercultural Competence

Learning about the preferences that describe your own culture's patterns to understand better your own beliefs, values, norms, and social practices is an important step toward improving intercultural competence. The discussion of cultural identity in this chapter should serve to reinforce this guideline. A good place to begin is by describing your own cultural identity. The answers to these questions will help you understand the possible consequences, both positive and negative, of your cultural identity as you communicate interculturally.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

6.3.1: Explain how awareness of social categorizations increases intercultural competence

6.3.1: Social Categorizations

OBJECTIVE: Explain how awareness of social categorizations increases intercultural competence

To improve your intercultural competence by building positive motivations or emotional reactions to intercultural interactions, take an honest inventory of the various ways in which you categorize other people. Can you identify your obvious ethnocentric attitudes about appearance, food, and social practices? Make a list of the stereotypes,

Table 6.3 *Review:* Levels of Racism

Table 6.3 summarizes the three distinct levels where racism can occur.

Interactive

Level of Racism	Characteristics
Individual Level	
Institutional Level	
Cultural Level	

Racism involves beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of a given person toward people of a different racial

Start Over

both positive and negative, that you hold about the various cultural groups with which you regularly interact. Now identify those stereotypes that others might hold about your culture. By engaging in this kind of self-reflective process, you are becoming more aware of the ways in which your social categorizations detract from an ability to understand communication from culturally different others.

Culture Connections

Sometimes, there's no rational explanation for the way people act. Fear, prejudice, and hate are all part of the same package. It isn't pleasant, and it doesn't necessarily make sense.

—Thatcher Robinson

Ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and racism are so familiar and comfortable that overcoming them requires a commitment both to learning about other cultures and to understanding one's own. A willingness to explore various cultural experiences without prejudgment is necessary. An ability to behave appropriately and effectively with culturally different others, without invoking prejudiced and stereotyped assumptions, is required. Although no one can completely overcome the obstacles to intercultural competence that naturally exist, the requisite knowledge, motivation, and skill can certainly help to minimize the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination.

The intercultural challenge for all of us now living in a world where interactions with people from different cultures are common features of daily life is to be willing to grapple with the consequences of prejudice, discrimination, and racism at the individual, social, and institutional

Forms of Racism

Forms of racism vary in intensity and degree of expression, with some forms far more dangerous and detrimental to society than others. Symbolic racism[56] is most common in the United States; other forms include aversive racism[57] and racism based on factors such as unfamiliarity.

Interactive

Old-Fashioned Racism

The most extreme form of racism is **old-fashioned racism**. Here, members of one group openly display obviously bigoted views about those from another group. Judgments of superiority and inferiority are commonplace in this kind of racism, and there is a dehumanizing quality to it. African Americans and other cultural groups in the United States have often experienced this form of racism from other U.S. Americans.

Symbolic Racism

Tokenism

Aversive Racism

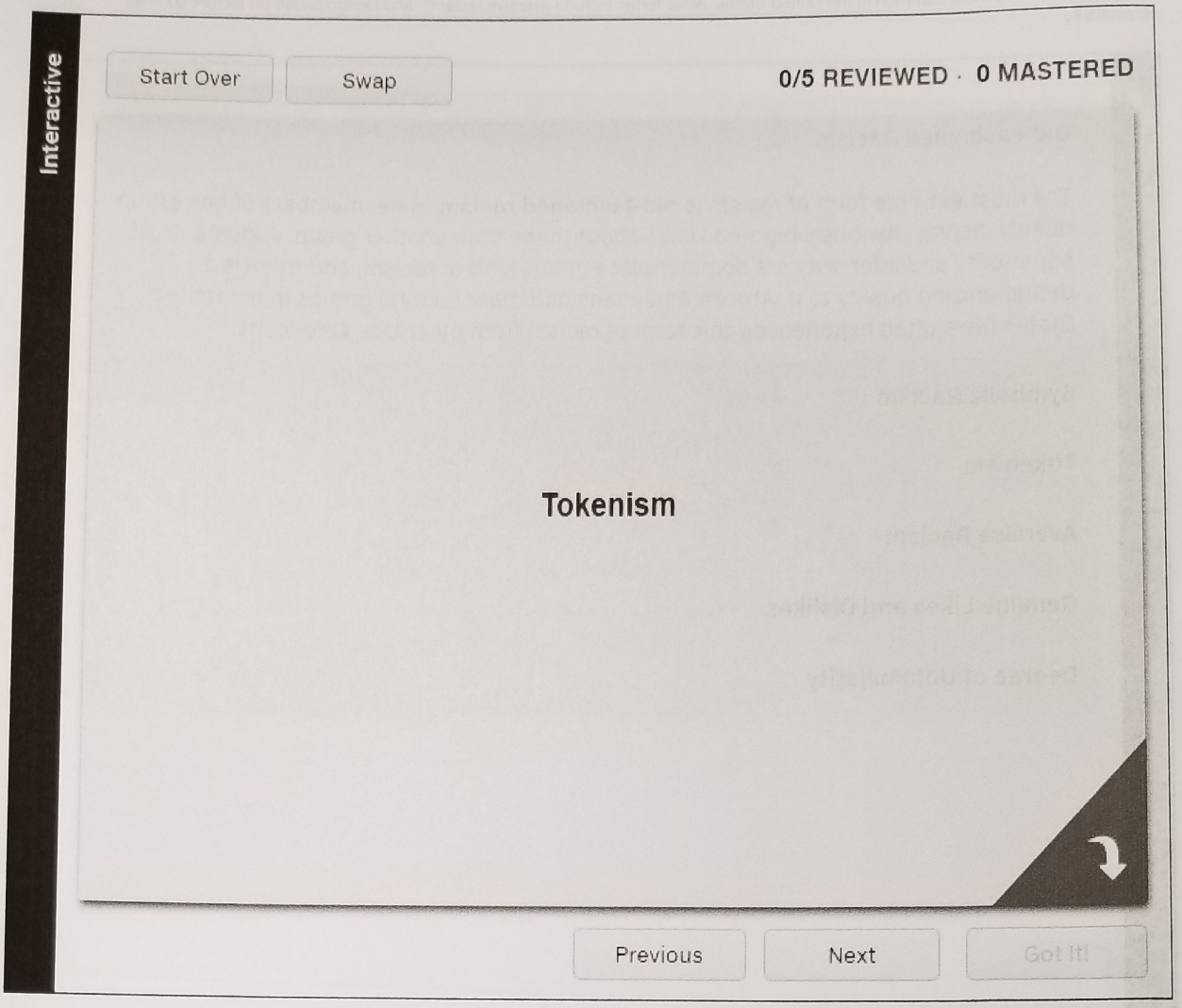
Genuine Likes and Dislikes

Degree of Unfamiliarity

levels. Because prejudice and racism are such emotionally charged concepts, it is sometimes difficult to comment on their occurrence in our interactions with others. Individuals who believe that they have perceived discriminatory remarks and prejudicial actions often recognize that there may be substantial social costs associated with speaking out, and consequently they may sometimes be unwilling to risk the negative evaluations from their coworkers, fellow students, teachers, or service providers that would likely occur should they directly confront such biases and demand interactions that do not display them.[58] Conversely, those who do not regard themselves as having prejudiced or racist attitudes and who believe they never behave in discriminatory ways are horrified to learn that others might interpret their attitudes as prejudiced and their actions as discriminatory. Although discussions about prejudice, discrimination, and racism can lead to a better understanding of the interpersonal dynamics that arise as individuals seek to establish mutually respectful relationships, they can just as easily lead to greater divisions and hostilities between people. The challenge for interculturally competent communicators is to contend with the pressing but potentially inflammatory issues of prejudice and discrimination in a manner that is both appropriate and effective.

We are also challenged to function competently in a world that, increasingly, is characterized by multiple cultures inhabiting adjacent and often overlapping terrain. The ability to adapt to these intercultural settings—to maintain positive, healthy relationships with people from cultures other than your own—is the hallmark of the interculturally competent individual.

Racism takes on many different forms, depending on the context.



WRITING PROMPT

From Cultural Identity to Intercultural Competence

Reflect on the following questions: To what extent have you always been aware of your cultural background, or have you experienced events that have caused you to search for an understanding of your cultural identity? To what degree do you place your cultural identity primarily in one cultural group or in several cultural groups? How does your cultural identity shape your social and personal identities? To what degree does your cultural identity result in a strong sense of others as either in or out of your cultural group? If so, in what ways were you taught to evaluate negatively those who are not part of your cultural group? Conversely, to what extent do you sometimes feel excluded from and evaluated negatively by people from cultures that differ from your own?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

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Summary: Cultural Identity and Cultural Biases

- The cultures with which you identify affect your views about where you belong and whom you consider to be "us" and "them."
- Our normal human tendency is to view ourselves as members of a particular group and to view others as not belonging to that group.

- Status, power, and economic differences heavily influence all intercultural contacts.
- Cultural biases are a reminder that all relationships take place within a political, economic, social, and cultural context.
- Biases occur because of the human need to organize and streamline the processing of information. They also impede the development of intercultural competence. Here are some examples:
  - Ethnocentrism
  - Stereotyping
  - Prejudice
  - Discrimination
  - Racism

  When people assume that these "thinking shortcuts" are accurate representations, intercultural competence is impaired.
- The intercultural challenge is to be willing to grapple with the consequences of prejudice, discrimination, and racism at the individual, social, and institutional levels.

SHARED WRITING

Reflecting on Your Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity and Prejudice

Describe the nature of your cultural identity (for example, how you define yourself, how much emphasis was placed on your cultural identity, how important that identity is to you).

Discuss how your cultural identity positively frames your own national/racial/ethnic groups *and* negatively frames other groups. Review and comment on at least two classmates' responses.

Debrief by answering the following questions: What do you make of this relationship between cultural identity and prejudice? How can you use these insights to be more interculturally competent in your future interactions?

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum